Send us your Catalogues. River. Ganges. April. 6th 1839.

My beloved Brethren.

It is with feelings of peculiar pleasure that I address you from this land of thick darkness - darkness, like its heat, "sensible to the feel". I rejoice in the privilege of communing with you, because of the enlivening & cheering influence of a recollection of the past, & yet I feel that a deep responsibility rests upon me as a member of your body. For though far distant from you "we are all members one of another" & bound to sustain an Institution so happy in its influence, & so glorious in its results. I look upon your Soc as well adapted to promote the spirit of genuine & deep piety, as to cherish & foster the spirit of missions. How can it be otherwise? are not the objects for which Xt died, & for which prayer is to be made, distinctly presented to the mind? The Candidate for the ministry, who loves to intercede for a dying world, will he listen to your reports unmoved, unaffected? Has he no offering of thanksgiving for the triumphs of the gospel? no petitions to present with fervour & importunity? will such a one absent himself from your meetings? The pointed remark of Dr Alexander in reference to a thinly attended concert may frequently be applied to your meetings. "Straws generally tell which way the wind blows." "where the treasure is, there will the heart be also." Were I with you again I should be more faithful in duty, more punctual, & more untiring in my efforts to promote the best interests of ~~your~~ Soc, to which I am so greatly indebted. We who are on the field can never make returns for the practical knowledge acquired, & surely can never forget those happy hours of pure enjoyment, & heavenly christian communion. Around your altars are entwined our purest affections. For your prosperity we still supplicate & in it shall ever rejoice. O forget not the trust committed to you. Seek for grace to plan with wisdom & execute with energy —

Without dwelling longer on a theme so fruitful, you will permit me to introduce you to this people, who like ourſelves, are immortal & bound to the judgment. The first view we had of *heathenism* the heathen was rather pleaſing & favourable. It conſisted of two Bengalese servants, Muſsulmen, who attended our Pilot & Leadsman. They were neatly dreſsed in white cotton cloth — having a kind of trowsers, a waistcoat & a kind of tunic which covered their entire persons. Their features were agreeable — their colour near the shade of our negroes. This was rather heathenism, partially refined. But soon a far different sight met our eyes. We had scarcely entered the Hoogley when several rude fishing boats approached us, manned by about 12 or 15 natives. I went to the bulwarks with my wife to gaze upon these strangers. Language cannot describe our feelings at that moment. They were dreſsed in the true native style, with a small piece of cotton cloth around their loins, which, from filth, was but a shade whiter than themſelves; — their frame slender — limbs long, & their features at the time of approach rather fierce & terrific. But this arose from their earnestneſs to secure a rope from our Brig which was under full sail with a fine breeze. We turned almost involuntarily from this scene. But ere we had reached the Quarter-Deck our thoughts reminded us that these were *the heathen* for whose salvation we had so often prayed — *the heathen*, to labour among whom we had sundered the most endearing ties, & sacrificed all the rich bleſsings of our native, christian land — *the heathen*, whose souls are as precious as ours, & for whose redemption an equal price has been paid, even the blood of the Lamb of Calvary. These reflections silenced every unbecoming thought & made our interests one. Since that hour we have beheld much that has filled us with disgust — horror & even overpowered our natural senſibilities. Yet thanks to our Heavenly Father for victorious grace, which has led us to pity their condition compaſsionate their wretchedneſs, & to intercede for their speedy redemption. You soon become accustomed to the almost naked~~neſs~~ of the adults, & the entire state of nudity of the children. You become accustomed to their filthineſs, so that you are no longer disgusted. You are soon familiarized with the sight of corpses consumed in the flames — or devoured by dogs, Buzzards, crows & hawks. Here I would remark that the Mohammedans bury their dead — the Hindoos who are able burn their dead & the poor Hindoos throw their dead into the rivers to be devoured by every beast of prey. It costs from 50cts to $1,00 to burn a body. Hence you may judge of the poverty of the people when such numbers of carcasses float down the rivers annually. — But all these things combined are nothing compared with their idolatrous ceremonies, which you witness at every hour of the day from day-break till twilight at evening, yes & you may see the enthusiastic crowd "mad upon their idols" moving along the banks of the Ganges with their lighted torches. From what I have observed in my journey on the Ganges I am inclined to believe that they worship their gods, not because they love the worship, or take any pleasure in the performance of their ceremonies, except it may be the pleasing hope that their lives shall not be endangered by the anger of these wood or stone demons. Fear of their rage is the motive that presses them to such absurdities. There is no devotion of the heart, & scarcely of the head. You will see in the same company — a washerman splashing away on his plank — one making ablutions — another washing some animal, as the horse or cow — one filling his leather-bag with water, — some quarrelling most ferociously with their tongues etc, & in the midst of the whole a Brahmin with his string of beads, — his copper vessel to take up the sacred water, & his large boquet of flowers, which he scatters as an offering to the sacred river. While he performs his gesticulations, genuflections & makes every possible twist & turn of which the body is capable, he takes an equal interest in all that is going on around him. Like the Pharisees of old they "love to be seen of men & for a pretence make many prayers." As we pass them they increase the rapidity of the twirling of their beads — appear very grave & yet watch you closely until you have passed. Some of them have representations of their gods which they worship. Others make a form to suit their circumstances. This was the case as we lay at anchor one Sab evening. A female came down to worship — made three rude forms of clay — placed them in her earthen bowl — consecrated them by a little sprinkling of the sacred water, & then scattered some flowers upon them. Then the whole were turned out of the bowl, & the same round repeated until all her flowers were gone. After her ceremonies were done, she left these forms on the shore & I sent my servant to get them for me. They form an interesting incident in my missionary experience.

There is much of which I might write, but must wait till I have seen more of the intellectual darkness that envelopes this nation — more of the moral impurities which can never be proclaimed in the hearing of an American audience, & more of that spiritual blindness which ensures their certain, & eternal doom. But a brighter day is dawning upon India. Where but 35 yrs since there could be found only 20 who loved the Saviour, now there are numbered hundreds, pious, devoted & influential Xtians. "This is the Lord's work & marvellous in our eyes." Tracts are scattered in great numbers — the Testament translated by the beloved Martyn is found in many mud cottages. The people are becoming enlightened — caste, the firmest bulwark of Satan in this empire, is giving way. I had the privilege of communing with the Rev Mr Moore, Baptist, who has been here 35 yrs, & was associated with Carey, Judson etc. His inmost soul leaps with joy as he beholds the rising glories of Immanuel's kingdom. May our God hasten it in his time. Brethren if you wish to know what heathenism is you must come & see, for language cannot describe it. We hope to welcome many of you as co-labourers in this land of abominations.

Bro Scott unites with me in our kindest regards to our beloved Fathers Dr A & Dr M & to the Younger Prof — & all the Brethren with whom we have been acquainted. May grace, mercy & peace be multiplied unto you all. Your affec Brother [illegible] Freeman

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